

to act expeditiously on this and my September 14th emergency supplemental request.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks Following an Inspection of Hurricane Damage in Lake Wales, Florida

September 29, 2004

I want to thank the McKenna boys for showing us around here, giving us a chance to see the devastation that took place here from not just one hurricane but three hurricanes. I want to thank my brother Jeb for his hospitality and his leadership. I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, for being down here. I want to thank Charlie Bronson, secretary of agriculture. I want to thank Adam Putnam, Congressman from this part of the world. Every time I see Adam, all he does is talk about oranges. His hair is kind of orange.

I understand a lot of people in this area, like Marty and Pat, were hit hard by Jeanne and Charley and Frances. These are storms that have taken lives, storms that have created severe flooding, storms that caused major power outages, and storms that damaged farms and homes and hospitals and roads. It's been a devastating period for the State of Florida. It is the first time in nearly 120 years that four hurricanes have hit the same State in a single season. People of Florida have met historic challenges with extraordinary strength and generosity.

State emergency response teams have saved lives by evacuating people before the storm and responding swiftly after the storm arrived. Power crews and telephone workers are putting in long hours to restore services. Despite week after week of strain, faith-based groups like Southern Baptists and the Salvation Army are setting up

kitchens to feed the hungry. The Red Cross is running shelters and providing medical services for the injured. The National Guard is distributing supplies and conducting safety patrols. Across the State, people are showing great compassion and helping their neighbors make it through these storms, and I thank them for their care and their decency.

The Federal Government is continuing our active role in the recovery efforts. We're working closely with Governors like Jeb and with other State and local officials to make sure resources reach the people who need it. I've asked Congress to provide \$12.2 billion to respond to Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. My request provides resources to repair bridges and highways and hospitals. It includes funding for the Small Business Administration to make loans to homeowners and small businesses. It includes more than \$8 billion for FEMA, the largest amount ever provided in response to a natural disaster. FEMA has responded rapidly to all four storms, and they continue working to make disaster assistance available to people in need.

I want to thank Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and FEMA Director Mike Brown for their tremendous work these past few weeks. They, and those who work for FEMA, have the gratitude of the administration and the people of this country.

I know Florida's agriculture sector has been hit especially hard. Marty and Pat almost lost half their orange crop. I know a lot of other growers have lost a lot of crop too. My budget request will provide vital assistance to the citrus growers and to other farmers and ranchers who've suffered losses. Secretary Veneman and I will also ensure that Florida farmers are treated fairly on the global market and that no country takes advantage of citrus growers during this time of disaster. My administration will make sure that citrus remains a strong part of this State's economy.

The Federal Government is committed to helping people here get back on their feet. I call on Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so we can get more people in Florida the help they need. These have been trying weeks for Americans across the Southeast, especially in this

State. Once again, I want to thank Jeb for his outstanding leadership. I thank the citizens of Florida for their great courage and their decency. Our Nation is praying for the victims of these storms. We pray for all who come to their aid.

May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. in an orange grove owned by brothers Marty and Pat McKenna. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles H. Bronson; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Disaster Relief Officials and Volunteers in Stuart, Florida *September 30, 2004*

Thank you all very much for being here. And I'm really glad to be with my brother Jeb, the Governor, who has done such a—Jeb has shown tremendous leadership and compassion during these trying days for this great State. I am really proud of him.

I want to thank Mike Brown of FEMA. He has worked really hard as well to help relieve the suffering from these storms.

I want to thank all the State and local officials for working hard. I had the chance to meet some county commissioners from this county, people from the sheriff's office, people from the police department, all of whom are spending an extraordinary amount of time helping the citizens here who hurt.

I appreciate the strong leadership of the—of those who represent the armies of compassion. I'm proud to stand with the

men and women of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other faith-based and community groups that are providing important relief. Volunteers like these behind me have worked long hours to help those affected by the storms—long hours not only in Florida but in other States as well. The Red Cross, for example, has sheltered over 400,000 people. The Salvation Army, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Convoy of Hope from Springfield, Missouri, and other faith-based groups have set up kitchens and helped feed the hungry.

Unions and truckers have transported supplies. Young people have given up free time to lend a hand. I just met with some of the high school students here from Martin High School who are volunteering to help the Red Cross. I thank them for their example. I thank them for their service.